

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

**Anglo-Irish deal will not put a stop to:**

# Paisley's bigots

LOYALIST OPPOSITION to the Anglo-Irish agreement is entering a new phase of "civil disobedience". Arch bigots, Molyneaux and Paisley have called for a rent and rates strike. Ex UDR major, Ken Maginnis wants a ban on paying car taxes. Loyalist councils are refusing to meet. And there is still talk of an all-out stoppage to coincide with the marching season.

But the one day strike in March unleashed a wave of intimidation and bigotry. The fall-out from the strike showed up the strains within the Loyalist camp. Molyneaux is now against further strike action. This directly reflects the views of Northern Ireland's bosses. They are against the deal—but they are even more against any disruption to their profits.

Paisley has not ruled out a strike because he dare not backslide on his more hard line supporters.

These strains within the Loyalist camp are only one sign of the problems they face in pulling down the Agreement. Thatcher is far more determined to preserve it than the Labour government was in the 1974 Sunningdale agreement. Any retreat would undermine her allies in the South.

The British and Irish establishment are more coordinated than before.

The danger is that Loyalist opposition will enter a still further "new phase". Alan Wright of the Ulster Clubs has already spelt out what this

means:

"You would have a very difficult job convincing the ordinary Loyalist men and women that violence cannot achieve what the politicians failed to achieve."

There is no doubt that the target of Wright's threat. Already there have been three sectarian murders in the north Belfast area since the start of the year. John O'Neill from Ligoniel was the latest victim after being beaten to death. Paisley's and Molyneaux's rhetoric gives a licence to the sectarian assassins.

In this situation it is vital that every socialist knows where they stand clearly on the matter. We are opposed to the Anglo-Irish agreement because it offers the Catholic minority nothing but a few symbols and a lot more repression. It does nothing to remove the roots of discrimination against working class Catholics. Paisley and Molyneaux are against the deal because they want more repression without even making the appearance of concessions.

Their aim is to wed Protestant workers to the defence of marginal privilege for another generation.

But these privileges in jobs and housing work against the class interests of the mass of Protestant workers.

That is why socialists who fight the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Loyalist bigots stand for the interests of all workers throughout this island.

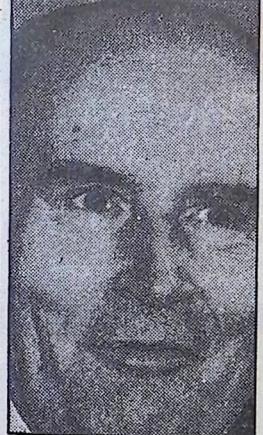


Paisley's and Molyneaux's rhetoric gives a licence to the sectarian assassins

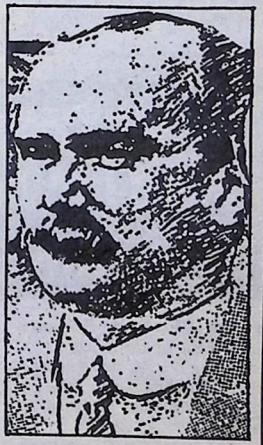
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## Hospitals close...



## Hospital opens!

Few things illustrate the widening gap between rich and poor in this country more than the newly built Blackrock Clinic.

The white hexagonal building that is the outpatient's clinic stands off from the road. It resembles a five-star hotel more than a hospital, with a glass roof and glass elevators.

Plants drape from the tiers of balconies that surround a central well and fountain, and leather armchairs grace the entrance hall.

Apart from the opulence of the surroundings, the facilities make it among the most advanced treatment centres in the country. The X-ray department alone will have cost around £2 million by the time the brain scanner is installed, and the diagnostic nuclear technology is working. The physiotherapy department has the latest equipment available in Switzerland.

### SCOOPED

There are 37 consulting suites, that cost near on £140,000 each. They have been scooped up by the fat cat doctors who will treat their equally fat cat private patients there. If hospitalisation is necessary, there's the 108 bed hospital just behind, and connected with, the clinic itself.

Here again, the surroundings are luxurious, the equipment second to none, and the nurses have even taken special courses in "how best to relate

to patients". (Perhaps they've to learn to curtsey or at least bow a lot!)

*The hospital is not yet in fact open, because the board that runs Blackrock are still haggling with VHI about meeting the cost of a stay there, estimated at around £1,500 per week.*

The funding for the whole thing comes from BUPA, the British based medical insurance company and a consortium of banks. They're the same banks that suck up vast amounts of our tax money by way of interest payments on government loans, loans taken out to fund the building of public hospitals schools etc. In order to pay the bankers, the government cuts back on public spending.

### EMERGENCY

The closure of eight hospitals recently announced by Barry Desmond, is the outcome, but it's not the whole story. A whole series of major hospitals are to close wards and cut back on emergency services this summer because of under-funding. Those affected include St Vincents, James' and the Mater (not the private part!), Hollis Street, the Rotunda, Baggott St, and Blanchardstown, as well as major hospitals outside Dublin.

What it adds up to is if you're poor you can't afford to be sick, if you're rich, the best health care that money can buy is all available under one glass roof in Blackrock.

—MARY SMITH

## VICTIMISATIONS FOLLOW CORK ESB STRIKE DEFEAT

180 DRIVERS and linesmen in the ESB in Cork were recently on a 22 week long strike. The issue was their refusal to operate without drivers.

They were finally starved and beaten back to work. A key role in their defeat was played by the ATGWU official, Jimmy Tinkler.

That was bad enough. But then a vindictive management

suspended five members of the strike committee.

The Joint Industrial Committee of the ESB recommended that they be reinstated. Yet four weeks after the recommendation was issued the 5 are still suspended.

Management at the ESB are building up a store of bitterness that will eventually explode in their faces.

—JIM BLAKE

## Special Branch

# I'm the fastest gun in Dublin

Here is Ireland's pot-bellied Clint Eastwood on the draw. Garda Power is a member of our own secret police force, the Special Branch. That force distinguished themselves by their valour and courage in trying to arrest Eibhlín Glenholmes outside

the BHS store in Dublin. They fired five shots into a crowded street.

One Sunday Tribune journalist was really impressed by their coolness under pressure. He reported, "One Garda shouted 'Get down on the ground, you'.

I showed him my press card but he shouted back, 'Get down on the fucking ground! No softness there for the pinkos from the press.'

Garda Power's mistake was to be photographed. A storm of criticism came down on his head. But our

rulers don't meddle with their watch dogs. Garda Power wasn't going down—he was going up.

One week after the incident, he became Garda Sergeant Power. Who says there is no promotion prospects in the Garda!



Garda Power is quick on the draw.

## Oil moguls put boot in

THE OIL Companies have finally broken the OPEC organisation over supply. Oil prices have recently dropped from £40 a barrel to £10 a barrel.

In Ireland, last year was also a good year for the companies. BP discovered oil in bloc 48-18, Gulf found oil

in bloc 50-6.

But none of this has made them any more "moderate" in their dealings with their workers. This year, they demanded through the FUE, that two named workers should not be employed on the rigs. They made vague charges of misbehaviour

against them. The union replied that the men have not been dismissed for their misbehaviour and when the case came before an arbitrator he stated that he was not prepared to give the workers a life sentence of blacklisting. The management refused to accept arbitration.

This case must be fought hard by the rig workers. If there are any concessions made, the bosses will have a longer list next year. They are trying to force the union to sack its own members.

This is not on!

—PADDY WHITE

## Belfast strip-search protest

2,000 PEOPLE marched up the Falls Road on Sunday 9th March to protest against the continued strip-searching of women political prisoners in Northern and British jails.

In an attempt to minimise the protest, the UDR had stopped buses bringing demonstrators from all over Ireland. We were escorted by truck loads of the RUC and British Army to a rally at Connolly House in Andersons town to be addressed by Armagh prisoner Breige Brourlee, Sinn Féin councillor Lily Fitzsimmons, Gerry Adams and Sarah Rowloffs of the Labour Party Committee on Northern Ireland.

Strip-searching was introduced at Armagh Jail in November 1982 by James Prior. Since then over 2,000 strip-searches have been carried out on the small number of women held there. The women are strip-searched every time they leave and re-enter the jail for court trials brief remand hearings and inter-prison visits. The official excuse for this humiliating and degrading tactic is security grounds—"necessary to maintain an acceptable level of security for the safe custody of inmates".

A quick look at the facts exposes this excuse for the lie that it is. In the 3½ years of strip-searching at the Jail never once has anything been

discovered which can even vaguely be seen as a threat to security. This is hardly surprising since the prisoners never come into contact with any member of the general public during these visits.

Yet early last month, the British Minister for Prisons, Nicholas Scott once again repeated that strip-searching was necessary for "security" and announced that they would continue in Maghaberry, the new women's prison to which the Armagh women prisoners have been transferred.

The speakers on the 9th March rally spoke about the horrors of strip-searching. The whole emphasis was on the female, religious and Irish

nature of these horrors. They called for action to build broad support to campaign against strip-searching as a humanitarian issue—petitions, stalls, photo exhibitions, lobbying TDs, local government councillors, women's groups, the church and trade unionists.

The emphasis was wrong. This is not to argue that the terrible mental and physical effects of this obnoxious method of repression are not important but that strip-searching must be seen and fought as part of the whole oppressive and repressive apparatus of the Northern State.

The motive behind strip

searching is to crush the Republican movement through repression. The Northern state was founded on injustice; a state set up on this basis requires a repressive system to enforce its discrimination.

Strip-searching then is part of this system along with the Diplock courts, supergrass trials, internment under the new name—remand, extradition, plastic bullets etc.

As socialists we entirely support the struggle against strip-searching but we must see the struggle as part of the wider struggle against the whole set up of the Northern state and British imperialism.

—VICKI WASS



# WE THINK

# US on the rampage

THE FIRST quarter of 1986 has thrown the essential features of the world system into sharp relief, in particular US foreign policy.

Before his overthrow, Marcos was supported to the hilt by the US—as were Duvalier, Somoza and the Shah before him, and as are Pinochet, Suharto and Zia—because he was a huge strategic asset to US imperialism.

Marcos opened his country for the explicit benefit of US military and economic interests in return for a bloated share of the spoils, and just as long as he could keep the lid on popular outrage, no matter how bloodily, he was backed every step of the way. Only when the tide of popular anger became unstoppable did the US step back in mock horror and let it engulf him.

Nicaragua, by contrast, has attempted to pursue an independent policy since the Sandinista revolution. It is not necessary to idealise the regime in Nicaragua as a workers' paradise to recognise its attempt to free itself from US domination.

The American rulers have sought to deter other Third World countries taking the same road. They armed, trained and financed a gang of Somoza cronies and promoted them to the status of freedom fighters. Even for many establishment politicians in the US, claims that the Contras represented anything other than a cat's paw for the CIA were transparent.

The Administration has attempted to bounce a reluctant Congress into greater overt support for the Contras by dramatising an "invasion" of Honduras. That even the Honduras government and even the Contras were embarrassingly unaware of until prompted by the White House.

And Libya. Again it is not

necessary to view the Gadaffi regime through rose-tinted spectacles to see that a nationalist regime, self-confidently pursuing its interests in opposition to US imperialism, openly proclaiming support for the Palestinians is going to be thought of in American ruling circles much as an uppity Taig would be in the Shankill Road.

Claims that Libya is a centre of international terrorism are pretty rich coming from the most powerful nation in the world whose dollars support nearly every murderous tyrant going.

Libya claims the Gulf of Sidra as an integral part of her territory. The rights and wrongs of this claim are beside the point. In the biggest display of armed might since the second world war, the American Sixth Fleet sails in to perform manoeuvres. As a result of this provocation an armed conflict ensues as everybody knew it must. For what would have been the effect of the Russian navy exercising in the Gulf of Mexico? It then turns out that the whole affair had been planned months ago—Libyan defences evaluated, targets identified, over flying reconnaissance missions; the lot.

## CRISIS

And then there's the "Evil Empire". Russia's arthritic economy is groaning under the weight of the renewed arms race of the last five years. No doubt there was the usual quantum of bluster and posturing in her proposals for arms reductions. Nonetheless every serious commentator regarded her desire for reductions as genuine. America's response is to up the stakes with Star Wars. Russia suspends nuclear tests hoping for

America to follow suit. Last month the US arrogantly recommences testing. With this act the nuclear carousel is set spinning again—faster than ever.

Those, on the left and elsewhere, who affect a detached nonchalance in the face of this heightening tension, profess to see in it evidence only of Reagan's "flakiness". Marxists cannot allow themselves that indulgence. Grubby tyrants are not payrolled; counter revolutionaries are not trained and organised; naval warfare is not planned and executed and the arms race is not accelerated on the strength of an old man's caprice. Service chiefs, heads of departments, security agencies, to say nothing of an army of special advisors, are all involved in these decisions. In short this is the collective response of the US political and military state machine. It is a response to the increasing strains the post war imperialist carve up of the world is undergoing.

Put simply, the end of the

second world war saw the division of the world into the spheres of influence of two great armed imperialist camps—those of Russia and USA. With a mixture of the carrot of economic beneficence and the rod of armed power the two great powers kept their vassals in order while they struggled amongst each other for predominance. Under the shadow of Mutually Assured Destruction a rough balance was established and a crazy kind of stability that facilitated the post-war boom. By the golden, autumnal rays of this boom a relaxation in rivalry—detente—was even possible in the 70s.

## IMPERIALISM

Not any longer. The long-run crisis of capitalism has upset the apple cart. In the East, Afghan peasants and Polish workers chafe at the yoke. In the West, Nicaraguans are the latest to try and break free of America's iron

grip. With long term stable growth taken off the agenda East and West, the rebellion of masses of oppressed, whether under the banner of Islamic fundamentalism, third world nationalism or even socialism is inevitable. So too is the repressive response. And the inter-imperialist rivalries intensify.

Reagan is merely the clownish front-man for US imperialism. Notwithstanding the small print of the South's non-membership of NATO, we live in the Western camp. The main enemy for socialists in this conflict then must be the leaders of the Western camp—and of course their local representatives, our rulers.

Whilst opposing Reagan's mendacious foreign policy, we must understand it is only part of the world capitalist set-up and build the only power that can finally defeat it—a revolutionary workers movement.



# Shop stewards witchhunt in Corpo union row

Socialist Worker interviews SWM member and Local Authority Workers group activist Charlie Nolan

**SOCIALIST WORKER:** What is the LAW Group?

**CHARLIE NOLAN:** It is the Local Authority Workers Group, a rank and file body in Dublin Corporation which is annually elected by Corpo workers. It has a subscription and a paper every quarter.

There are 17 unions in the Corpo and in 1980 LAW began including General Operatives. The wage structure in the Corpo is based on comparability with 19 outside firms. The LAW group was formed for rank and file workers because of inaction in the past by the trade union leaders.

**SW:** How do the union officials view the LAW group?

**CN:** They don't like it. Especially in UCATT, my own union which is very corrupt. In Socialist Worker we highlighted what was going on and the union official obtained a photocopy of it which he produced at the UCATT branch officers meeting in January. He told me my shop steward credentials would be taken away. But now all shop stewards who are in LAW are under fire. It is an attempt to

dampen down any threat of rank and file militancy and organisation. For example, Brendan O'Sullivan, another shop steward, came under the hammer simply because he was a member of LAW.

In Dublin Corpo, the union officials have enormous power which they wish to maintain. The LAW group has the potential to give some self-confidence back to rank and file workers—that is why the officials have acted as they have.

## ISSUES

**SW:** What issues have the LAW group taken up?

**CN:** Travelling time is one example. The officials have reacted against it. Instead of listening to the rank and file and what they want, the officials have been hostile to the Travelling Time campaign by LAW.

The LAW group asked for a mass meeting on the travelling time issue where shop stewards could have the right to be on a negotiating body for Dublin Corpo.

Workers. The officials refused out of hand and the result of all this was that nearly 4,500 workers have signed a petition and made a subscription to fight on the travelling time issue. The officials don't want it. Yet travelling time is not considered part of our wages. You don't get it when you are on holidays or out sick, yet we are taxed on it along with our wages.

The LAW group has been successful in taking up this issue. That's why it is a so-called problem to the union officials.

**SW:** Was it taken up in a militant way?

**CN:** Unfortunately not. In fact LAW is testing the case in the Court. The issue is such that it would be hard to get direct action. Nevertheless LAW actually did something.

## BULLYING

**SW:** And the officials reacted against it?

**CN:** Yes, it was terrible. They've used bullying tactics, for instance

one official called up to a shop steward's house and threatened him with the loss of his job.

Bobby Rice of UCATT has gone to the Personnel Department and used their assistance, pointing people out and saying that representatives of LAW should not be recognised. It's disgusting.

## APATHY

There is a certain amount of apathy to what is happening, but that reflects the general bureaucracy of the unions involved. Small issues like travelling time can show a way forward.

**SW:** How has LAW responded to the threats?

**CN:** A petition has gone out to Corpo workers to support LAW and our right to be members of it.

The support is there. Workers respond to an issue of this sort much more than say a petition against killing animals for research. Meetings are held to explain what is happening.

**SW:** Have the officials sought

support against LAW?

**CN:** No. Their position is quite undemocratic. Those involved are a few officials at the top and the management of the Corpo.

In UCATT, Bobby Rice thrives on apathy, but apathy can be changed by activity.

**SW:** Will LAW survive?

**CN:** Yes, if it builds a militant campaign against the threats and pushes for broader support, the officials can be stopped in their tracks. If not the officials will regain control.

**SW:** Did you get much support yourself in your depot when you were informed of the situation?

## MEETING

**CN:** I called a meeting in the depot as a shop steward when I heard that they were going to take away my position undemocratically. It was well attended and the majority supported me. There are 17 unions represented in my depot. I just represent UCATT workers, but all members of LAW must now

fight this tooth and nail.

**SW:** If the officials succeed against LAW, will things get worse in the Corpo?

**CN:** Yes indeed. The fact is that LAW has made some small gains. We have fought against victimisation; bad conditions and taken up travelling time. It supported the storemen's strike against lay-offs in spite of the officials telling workers to pass pickets. The officials do very little, while the situation gets worse.

## CLAMP DOWN

6 years ago, the officials talked about a travelling time policy but the minute someone acts, the officials clamp down. Contractors are coming in and jobs will go, cut backs are taking place and the unions are weak. This is where LAW comes in. To strengthen the union it must fight the attack upon it. If we stand firm workers can regain their confidence to fight the bosses and overcome the

**INTERNATIONAL**

# French Elections

★ Right-wing majority in assembly

★ Socialists largest party

★ CP vote all time low

★ Fascists make gains

A FEW Sundays ago we had the strange spectacle on TV of the French Socialist Party celebrating the fact that it had just lost the elections.

Nobody had imagined that they would win. What was hotly disputed was the margin by which they would lose.

The Socialist Party leadership resorted to the most cynical manoeuvres possible to save their parliamentary position.

Confirming his reputation as a wily politician, Mitterrand used the last year to milk his position as president for all it was worth.

He rammed through a law changing the method of election. Out went the

two-round system which produces majorities in the British pattern. In came proportional representation.

He claimed it was an extension of democracy. In reality that was the furthest consideration from his mind.

He was determined to spoil the right wing parties' chances of winning an absolute majority.

He did this by cynically promoting

the National Front. Under the new system Mitterrand allowed the National Front to 'steal' votes that would normally have gone to the traditional right wing parties.

He has been richly rewarded for his pains. The Gaullist RPR and the centre-right UDF together only just scraped home with a seven-seat absolute majority (they have won 291 seats).

The Socialist Party remains the largest single party (with 215 seats).

Thanks to Mitterrand the National Front have made a parliamentary breakthrough. They now have 32 seats. Clearly he thought it a small price to pay for dashing the RPR/UDF coalition's chances for a solid majority.

Parliamentary manoeuvring outweighed the increased harassment that immigrants will face as a result of the Front's breakthrough.

The loss of Socialist Party votes is easy to explain. Three and a half years of austerity measures have disillusioned and demoralised their supporters. The right wing parties capitalised on their discontent and the National Front exploited the anti-immigrant backlash.

### Clampdown

Yet the Socialist Party didn't suffer the crushing defeat some had expected. Falling inflation last year meant that despite a clampdown on wages, real incomes began to rise. This crumb of comfort persuaded many disillusioned workers to vote Socialist once again.

**THE RISE** of the National Front is a mark of how reactionary ideas have gripped sections of the French population. This is the first time since the war that fascists have had sizeable representation in any European parliament.

No where is this clearer than in the Marseilles area of southern France. Once a stronghold of the Socialist Party, the National Front polled 25 percent in the elections.

The right wing parties have blamed the government. They claim that the 'extremism' and the weakness of the government over 'security' have contributed to the Front's growth in popularity. This is pure hypocrisy since the right wing parties have also been exploiting anti-immigrant feeling.

The Socialist Party must take the main blame though. The failure of reformism in office has produced the climate in which the fascists could thrive. Whether they will continue to do so depends on whether the French working class discovers its strength in struggle.

**THE COMMUNIST Party is now very badly placed to mount any kind of left-wing opposition to the right. It has suffered more than the Socialist Party from workers' disillusion.**

Since it went along with most of the government's austerity measures, only leaving the government in July 1984, it has lost its reputation for consistency. Only its hard core of supporters continue to give it blind loyalty.

In the new Assembly the Communist Party has a mere 35 seats—only three more than the National Front.

## SOUTH AFRICA

# Black workers fight on

REPORTS on South Africa in the media are being reduced to the usual sensationalist death bulletins. The image being presented is one of acts of violence rather than political struggle. In this way the issues can be obscured and confused in the minds of people.

We have seen this happen here with the North over the last 18 years. Despite this it is obvious that South Africa is becoming more turbulent and the working class more organised.

It is principally in the major mines around Johannesburg (Vaal Reefs, Blyvooruitzicht, Joubertown) that things are happening. This is significant for two reasons: first, it reflects the growing membership and strength of the union and second, it hits the South African economy in its most sensitive area, as it depends largely on an export product.

### MILITANCY

The recent setting up of the new union federation COSATU, with its overtly political programme reflects the growing organisation and militancy of the Labour movement. Regularity of strikes and the growing strength of the unions are worrying the capitalist institutions of the country.

The Anglo-American group, which controls a large part of the mines, claims to oppose Apartheid. The management of the US-owned General Motors plant in Port Elizabeth decided to give legal and financial aid to employees who defied segregation laws affecting the use of the city's beaches. The de-



Defiance continues in South Africa ...

cision was naturally condemned by the conservative whites.

This antagonism between big-business and the conservative white group with its National Party led by PW Botha is a clear example of how capitalism works: on the one hand large multi-nationalists who want to defend their interests and see apartheid as having served its purpose and want reforms to stave off revolution; on the other Botha's party which serves the interests of Afrikaner capital but depends on the conservative whites, who gain from apartheid, for the main

body of its support. So reform of apartheid is resisted.

The government continues to try to isolate the ANC. Botswana recently expelled representatives of the ANC under pressure from South Africa, which claims ANC guerrillas were using it as a base for cross-border raids. In this way South Africa is attempting to widen the buffer zone around its borders.

But within its borders it has not been so successful. In March seven leaders of COSATU had talks with the ANC in Lusaka. And students at the University of Cape Town voted massively in fav-

our of talks with the ANC, despite the fact that the government opposes any contact with the guerrilla group.

The picture is of uncoordinated unrest. Strikes, stay-aways, boycotts, riots, etc. What is missing is a clear political lead. The ANC does not and cannot lead workers in their day to day struggles, as it has organised itself on the basis of a guerilla operation and broad class alliances. The formation of COSATU is a step in the right direction, but union-based struggles have in the past failed—Dublin 1913, Solidarity in Poland.

JOE O'BRYNE

At the same time, the austerity measures will have reassured some middle-class voters. The spectre of Thatcherite confrontation may have convinced these voters to remain with Mitterrand's reasonably successful pro-capitalist policies rather than risk the uncertainties of the right wing.

The Socialist Party's narrow defeat still gives them enormous strength, particularly Mitterrand. He now has plenty of room for manoeuvring. As president he has the right under the constitution to appoint the prime minister.

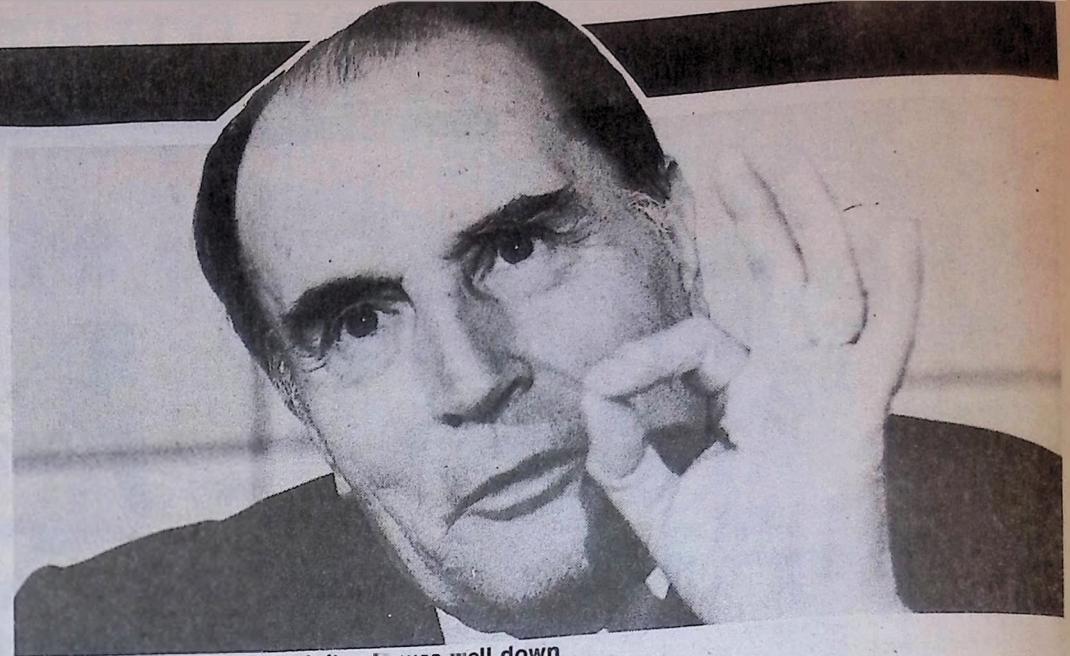
All the right wing leaders, except Raymond Barre, have declared their willingness to 'cohabit' with a socialist president. With the presidential elections in two years' time, Mitterrand has ample opportunity to play on the rivalries in the right wing coalition.

### Buddies

Jacques Chirac, the leader of the RPR and the coalition, is the front runner to become the next prime minister. But the UDF may be open to being wooed by Mitterrand. The name of Jacques Chaban-Delmas, a liberal Gaullist in the RPR, has also been mentioned. He and Mitterrand are old buddies from the war-time Resistance.

Having cynically used the National Front to foil the ambitions of the traditional right, Mitterrand will now use the menace of the fascists' rise to parliamentary prominence. He will exploit the reluctance of many in the right wing coalition to depend on National Front votes in the Assembly.

Equally, he will use the Front to promote the need for a broad democratic unity against extremism. All this will present him and the leadership of the Socialist Party with a perfect excuse for doing nothing.



Not quite that bad, but the left vote was well down

# Cynicism wins

## OUR HISTORY

# THE WESTERN SOVIETS



V. I. Lenin

Very few people believe in Parliament. Even TDs (especially TDs!) see it as little more than a talking shop which only appears to be doing anything. The problem is that most people don't see any alternative. But an alternative does exist, and has existed for over a hundred years. That alternative is the Soviet or Workers' Council.

The first embryo of a soviet had appeared in 1871 when the workers of Paris rose to defend themselves against the consequences of French defeat by Prussia. The first Soviet was called the Paris Commune and it exhibited all the features of subsequent soviets—mass representation, equal pay, immediate recall of delegates etc.

But it was in Russia in 1905 that it became clear that the workers council is the organ of working class democracy.

In the middle of a massive revolutionary upheaval which had shaken the Russian empire to its core, several groups of strikers came together in Petrograd, now Leningrad.

They set up what was initially an expanded strike committee. But in the heat of events it became a lot more than that.

The aspirations of workers went way beyond merely winning this or that strike. The struggle rapidly forced them to question the whole way in which society is run.

The first workers' council or "soviet" in Russia—grew out of that strike committee and started to fulfil a much wider role.

## ORGANISATION

The soviet is a direct transmission belt between the mass of working people and a central organisation. For the first time in history workers are able to govern their own lives.

The 1905 revolution was defeated but since then at times of social crisis, when workers have risen, the soviet has been their spontaneous form of organisation—Barcelona 1917, Russia again in 1917, Italy, Germany and Hungary 1918-20, and again in recent times in Eastern Europe—Hungary 1956 and Poland 1980. The most powerful and widespread wave of sovietisation followed the First World War.

Unlike Parliament, the soviet is efficient and flexible in

Parliamentary channels have proved incapable of defending workers against mass unemployment and falling living standards—but what is the alternative? East European-style dictatorship certainly has nothing to offer. But history provides another way. In the years 1915-20 workers all over Europe set up their own alternative, their own mass democracy. In Germany, Britain, Italy and Russia workers councils—or soviets, to use their Russian name—challenged the existing order. This book brings together a wealth of information which is more relevant today than ever.

# THE WESTERN SOVIETS

## WORKERS' COUNCILS VERSUS PARLIAMENT 1915-1920

Donny Gluckstein

IRE6.50 + £1.00 from SWM PO 1648, Dublin 8

*THE SYSTEM we live under is rotten, but how can it be changed?*

*Hardly at all, say most people. Only through the Dail say the Labour and Workers Party. Only through a combination of electoral activity and armed struggle say Sinn Fein.*

*But 80 years ago, a new form of workers organisation emerged to challenge those ideas—the soviet or workers' councils.*

*"The Western Soviets" is a new book by Donny Gluckstein. Here, JOHN STITT examines the experience of soviets.*



RED GUARDS in Petrograd

making law and carrying it out.

The critical difference between Parliament and the soviet is that while the former represents the rule of the bosses, the soviet represents the rule of the workers. Since the bosses are always the minority, Parliament cannot be both effective and responsive to the wishes of the majority. The solution?—Simple; give the masses a vote every few years, promise them better times, and then ignore them until the next election. The soviet has no such problem since it represents the interests of a class which is a majority. It can, therefore, carry out its own interests and still respond to any demands by the working class. So it has been throughout history.

## 1917

The Russian Soviets of 1917 led to the successful Russian revolution. The German and Italian ones were defeated and led, ultimately, to fascism. Crucial to the outcome of all three was the role of the revolutionary party, and the relationship between this party and the soviets.

The Russian revolution had a party, the Bolsheviks, which was politically clear, well-disciplined and had a network of militants on the shop floor. This party had been patiently built up by Lenin over the years, and had a clear understanding of the role of the soviets and its own role within them. By the use of the correct slogans "Peace, Bread and Land" and "All Power to the Soviets" the Bolsheviks were able to gain the support of workers within the spontaneously created soviets. Through

its web of worker militants, it was able to exhort or restrain workers at the crucial points. By holding back the seizure of power until they had support in the majority of soviets throughout Russia, they made certain that the working class, when it took power from the boss class, would hold that power.

## NAZIS

In Germany when the workers rose against the Kaiser after the war, the socialist political scene was dominated by the Social Democrats (SPD), and later, the Independent Social Democrats (USPD) both of which had a Marxist programme, but were conservative in their action. The only two alternatives to these were the Spartacists, a revolutionary break-away from the SPD, and an independent workers rank and file organisation (Obleute) centred around Berlin.

The Spartacists had most of the leading political thinkers and revolutionaries, but were without a serious following among workers on the ground. They were swept aside by the development of the soviets and could play no role in them.

The Obleute, on the other hand, had a well organised web of militants but were politically confused and, so could not act like a disciplined party. Not understanding that they should be welding a clear,

revolutionary bloc inside the soviets, they wasted precious energy on strikes and demonstrations about limited shop floor issues. When the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), modelled after the Bolsheviks, was eventually formed, it came after the main revolutionary heave.

Inexperience, which caused disastrous political turns, led it to being beaten and flattened by the Nazis.

In Italy, the soviets suffered the same fate as in Germany. There had existed an extensive and aggressive factory council movement. This movement lacked the political leadership that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had provided in Russia. The anarcho-syndicalists refused to sully their hands with any intermediate demands, and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) was dominated by conservatives who were not able nor inclined to lead workers in an aggressive struggle against the state.

## DISCIPLINE

It was not until the ebbing of the workers' militancy that the Marxists in the PSI broke away. By then it was too late. The PSI revolutionaries had failed to build a party with a closely woven discipline, sure of uniting workers and soldiers. Instead, workers were limited to purely economic struggles while their revolutionary force festered and rotted.

When the army and fascist militia counter-attacked, the workers were not prepared, politically or materially, to defend themselves. "The Western Soviets" concentrates on only three cities but the lessons of Berlin, Turin and Glasgow are general ones.

The ingredients for winning are clear: Lenin gave them in the Russian Revolution. The years of preparation were paid off when the social crisis erupted. In Italy, Germany and elsewhere the missing theoretical understanding and the consequent lack of preparation meant defeat and Fascism, leading, ultimately, to a World War.

## STALINISM

Despite the horrors of the 30s and 40s, some basic lessons have not been learnt. Stalinism has obliterated the achievements of Lenin so much so that in the West many Marxists have turned from the working class to the intellectuals, who provide no answer in themselves.

When the social crisis of capitalism explodes, as it surely will, the correct kind of party must be ready, must be part of the working class, yet with clear, distinct politics. It would then be in a position to expose the fake "socialists" when they move in to sell out the working class.

The existence of such a party brought the Russian working class to power. For the working classes of Germany and Italy, its absence had a tragic outcome.

"The Western Soviets"  
by Donny Gluckstein  
published by Bookman  
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Hungary 1956



# INSURRECTION

## EASTER 1916

THE 70th anniversary of the Easter rising will pass without an official ceremony. Yet twenty years ago the full pageantry of officialdom was laid on to commemorate the event.

All over the country, school boys and girls were marched out to salute the national flag and listen to patriotic speeches. RTE hired the Irish army as film extras in a marvellous series "Insurrection".

Even Conor Cruise O'Brien was able to write in praise of the rising.

But now a deafening silence! Marx once wrote that our rulers were "fraudulent deed-holders". They hide the violence and revolutions that brought them to power. The Irish boss class has more to hide than most. The period 1916 to 1923 was one of insurrection, guerrilla struggle and finally civil war. The period shows up too clearly their hypocrisy in condemning today's IRA. Their past also stands in the way of developing a closer alliance with their British counterparts.

### SEMI-MYSTIC

But what should the attitude of socialists be to the 1916 rising?

One section of intellectuals on the fringes of the Workers Party have joined the "revisionist" school of Irish history. They dismiss the rising as a "blood sacrifice". They point to the semi-mystic claims of Pearse that "Ireland will not find Christ's peace until she has taken Christ's sword". They argue that the leaders of 1916 believed that a redemption in blood was needed before the Irish race won back its Cuchulann-like qualities.

Now there is no doubt that Pearse often spoke as a "blithering idiot" as Connolly once said. But to judge the character of the rebellion by the words of Padraig Pearse is to miss the central point. Lenin argued that whatever the prejudices of its leaders, it was objectively a blow against imperialism. The crisis of imperialism which brought forth the war was first felt in the colonies. The revolt in Dublin coincided with a mutiny of Indian troops in Singapore, a rebellion in the French colonies in Africa and an anti-war movement in Czechoslovakia.

In all such cases the revolts may have been shrouded in appeals to the past—but the truth was that they represented the first shots of the revolutionary wave that swept the world a year later. For those reasons, revolutionaries defend the rising—then and now.

However another section of the left have gone a good deal further than defending the rising from the apologists for British imperialism. They argue that the "ideals" of the Rising must be taken up by today's working class. Thus the influential Communist Party historian, Desmond Greaves, gave an anniversary lecture on 1916 under the title of "In defence of the Nation State". This left-nationalist approach fails to look at whose class politics led the rising.

### MOVEMENT

**THE 1916 rising brought a new class alliance to the fore in the centuries-old nationalist movement. Up until the 20th century, that movement was primarily in the countryside. But by the end of the 19th century two major developments had begun to undermine the agrarian basis of the movement.**

Firstly, technological development in shipping, railways and refrigeration broke the British dependence on Irish agriculture. Henceforth, beef could be imported from as far away as New Zealand or Argentina. The willingness of the Liberal Party to grant Home Rule reflected the diminished role that Ireland played within the empire.

Secondly, a series of land acts had defused the revolutionary impulses of the Irish peasantry. The amount of small holdings under 15 acres fell by 20% between 1851 and 1910. More dramatically, the number of landless labourers fell from 600,000 to 350,000 in the same period. The profits of the British empire helped to bring about one of the few imperialist solutions to the land question.

The consolidation of a richer small farmer class and their connections with the gombeen men and the slum landlords of the cities soon gave rise to the United Irish League led by John Redmond. This was the first serious constitutional party since the fall of Parnell. But its programme of land reform and Home rule doomed Ireland to remaining a backwater within the empire. Slowly but surely the focus of the nationalist movement shifted from the countryside to the cities.

The first signs of this were found in cultural circles. In 1894 the Gaelic League was founded. It was one of a myriad of revivalist organisations. Their membership was drawn from the urban middle class—the school teachers, civil servants, journalists. This was the class which the empire had brought into being—but who also loathed the humiliation that Irish backwardness brought on them.

It was Arthur Griffith and Sinn Fein who provided the economic programme of the movement. They campaigned for protectionism, an Irish stock exchange, a national bank and marine service—in brief, for the emergence of native capital under the wing of an Irish state. The appeal of Sinn Fein was massive. In 1907 it fused with the Dungannon Clubs led by IRB member Sean Mac Diarmada to give it a national basis. Even after the organisation declined to a rump around Griffith himself, its ideas remained powerful.

From its earliest days, Sinn Fein and the urban middle class fought for the leadership of the workers movement. In 1909, a Sinn Fein leader in debate with the Socialist Party of Ireland argued, "In striving to bring British government to an end, Sinn Fein is opposing capitalism in its worst and most ruthless form and has surely a claim on every socialist in the land".

### LOCK-OUT

But in reality its aim was to use the strength of the workers movement as a battering ram to open the door for the re-birth of Irish capitalism.

It had considerable success in winning over a section of the workers movement. The IRB controlled Irish Volunteers was formed in the midst of the 1913 lockout with one of the employers on its platform. It refused to take a stand on the lock-out. But still large numbers of workers flocked to it. By 1916 itself, there were for



Pearse

example 16,000 in the Irish Volunteers compared to a membership of 200 in the Irish Citizen army.

There are a number of reasons why the urban middle class were able to win over a large section of the workers movement. But one factor in particular had to do with the nature of the nationalist movement itself. It was able to hold together a left wing and a right wing—despite the experience of the lock-out. On the right, Griffith maintained close connections with employers such as the paper merchant, Shackleton and newspaper boss William Martin Murphy. These connections would open the way for the native boss class to join Sinn Fein en masse after the war. But it also held prominent left wingers within its ranks—such as P T Daley the trades council activist. Above all as we shall see, the socialist movement was unable to develop a class analysis of the Sinn Fein/IRB/Irish Volunteer axis.

**THE Easter Rising was led by the most militant and radical section of the urban middle class. The participation of hundreds of workers in the ranks of the volunteers and citizen army does not alter this fact. Neither does Connolly's position as the Commander in Chief. One look at the nature of the rising will confirm its class character.**

It took place when the working class was demoralised and defeated. 132,454 Irish men and women joined the British army during the war. Redmond was able to boast that proportionately it was the highest in the Empire. A good number of them were the Dublin workers who had fought in 1913. Chauvinism had reached such a pitch in the atmosphere of defeat that Connolly even remarked that a section of workers had become bound to the empire.

### CHILDREN

**The Rising was an exclusively military affair. There were no calls to the ITGWU to organise strike action. Outside of a vague reference to cherishing "all the children of the nation equally", there was no specific programme to mobilise workers. Indeed the left wing Citizen Army accepted the discipline of the IRB and submerged its politics with those of the volunteers.**

History has judged this to be a mistake. The loss of independence in 1916 by the socialist movement was only the first step along a road that led to the acceptance of the slogan, "Labour must wait". But why did the most able Marxist in Britain and Ireland act as he did?

A number of factors in Connolly's background throw light on his decision.

Firstly, Connolly never understood the nature of republicanism that was being re-born in the urban middle class. Throughout his life he held onto the brilliant insight that "only the Irish working class remain the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland". But he was unable to translate this into a definite strategy when it came to republicanism.

Like many revolutionaries, he failed to see how the urban middle class could act independently in particular circumstances and lay the basis for a re-organisation of the capitalist national movement exclusively at the official constitutional leaders of the Home Rule movement failed to argue against the influence of republicanism within the working class.

### MENACE

The best example of this is Connolly's attitude to Arthur Griffith. Griffith's paper "The United Irishman" attacked the "socialist menace" right from the start in 1899. But Connolly refused to take up the gauntlet. After one such attack in 1899 he wrote, "The United Irishman has always been pretty straight on the national question—there is no point in averting to subjects we disagree on".

A year later, he sought Griffith's backing for the ISRP candidate. When it was forthcoming he merely wrote, "Mr Griffith's attitude is not worthy of him". This astounding relationship between the future leader of Irish labour and Irish capital could only be explained by the fact that Connolly misjudged the potential influence of republicanism on the working class and its potential for reviving Irish capitalism.

In Connolly's defence it has to be added that no socialist operating within the colonies had come near tackling these questions. It is only with the benefit of hindsight of the Irish revolution—and the later experience of countries like Zimbabwe, Algeria, Angola—that we know that while revolutionary socialists should work alongside radical nationalists they must at all times maintain independence and subject their independence to merciless criticism.

The second factor in Connolly's involvement in 1916 sprung from his attitude to party building. Connolly's belief in syndicalism—in the all conquering power of industrial unionism—combined with his experience of socialist sects in America, led him to argue against the formation of an independent revolutionary socialist organisation. In a letter in 1909 he wrote:

"I believe that our proper position is in the general socialist rather than Labour Movement as friends, critics and helpers rather than in separate organisations, as hostile critics and enemies."

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The damage caused by the shelling of Liberty Hall

# RECTION

## EASTER 1916



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"I believe that our proper position is in the general socialist or rather Labour Movement as friendly to critics and helpers rather than in separate organisations, as hostile critics and enemies."

But the absence of an independent force organised around Connolly's ideas forced him to call on others to act and initiate. In times of peace, this meant pressurising the Irish Trade Union Congress to set up a Labour Party for electoral purposes. In times of war it meant a turn to the republican movement—pressurising and cajoling them into the 1916 rebellion. But the experience of left wingers who act as advisors to republicanism is that they become submerged in its politics. It was Connolly who publicly called on the IRB leaders to take the insurrectionary road—but it was the politics of republicanism that shaped the rising.

## A PERIOD OF DEFEATS

THERE is a third factor which throws light on Connolly's involvement in the 1916 Rising. It must be remembered that Connolly, on his return to Ireland, lived through a period of profound defeat. In 1912 he saw the rise of the far-right Ulster Volunteer Force. In 1913 he witnessed the defeat of the Lock-Out and with it some of his own ideas on the power of industrial unionism. In 1914 Connolly, isolated in Ireland, unaware of any serious socialist opposition to the war effort, witnessed the miserable collapse of the Second International.

It is a tribute to Connolly that he held firm to his belief in revolutionary socialism throughout the period. Thus, in all his mistakes he stood head and shoulders over the vast majority of European socialists when he could write four days after the war was declared:

"Should the working class of Europe, rather than slaughter each other for the benefit of kings and financiers, proceed tomorrow to erect barricades all over Europe, we would be perfectly justified in following their example and contributing our aid to the final dethronement of the vulture classes that rule and rob the world."

He concluded his article on what a blow in Ireland could mean:

"Starting thus, Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last



given way to a massive anti-conscription movement. The ITGWU grew from 5,000 to 40,000.

The Bolshevik revolution unleashed a wave of hope when 10,000 Dublin workers celebrated its victory.

In the years to follow it was as Connolly predicted the working class who made up the backbone of the struggle for independence. A general strike won political status for the prisoners in Mountjoy. A transport strike attempted to halt the supplies to the Black-and-Tans. In Limerick, the workers proclaimed a soviet in opposition to military rule. Alongside the struggle to end British rule, workers advanced their own class interests. "Soviets" were set up in Leitrim, Cork and parts of Munster. The landless labourers began to occupy the estates.

The problem was that there was no socialist leadership to this great upsurge of activity.

The politics of class alliance ruled the day. Sinn Fein was able to make room for the old Home Rulers—but it met the workers movement with an appeal to hold back. Connolly's ambiguities were magnified a hundred fold by the leadership of the ITGWU who stood aside for Sinn Fein to give the lead.

### DEFEATS

None of this is surprising given the pressures he was under. The essential problem was that Connolly's experience of defeats—and his theoretical grounding in syndicalism—meant that he lacked a perspective on how workers could come through the downturn and rise again. Lacking such a perspective he felt called upon to act in isolation from the working class.

None of this is meant as a put down of Connolly. Revolutionary socialists in Ireland walk in his footsteps. But our's is a different tradition from those of the hero-worshippers. Because our struggle has not yet won, because the Marxist tradition is still weak in this country—it is vital that we subject the likes of Connolly to criticism in order to build today.

There is one other question arising out of the 1916 Rising: did Connolly have any alternative? This can only be answered by looking at what happened after his death.

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### LESSONS

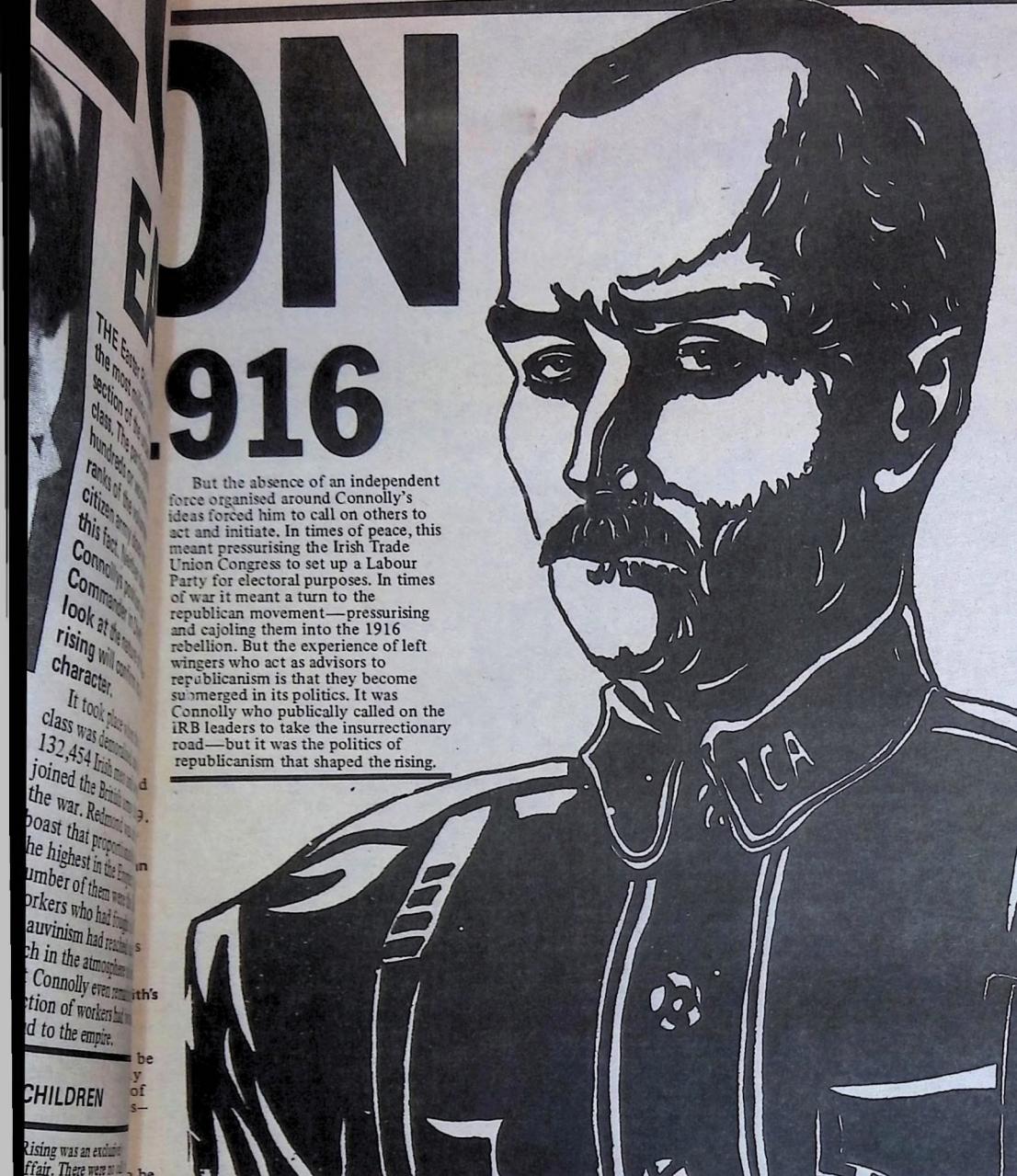
Just as Connolly had said, the workers fought—but the upper classes carried off the loot.

Today the anniversary of the 1916 rebellion should be used by socialists to learn some of the lessons of the past. We need to defend their anti-imperialism from today's hypocrites. But we also need to build an organisation that can put our class—the working class—at the head of the battles today.



The damage caused by the shelling of Liberty Hall

REPORT  
COMPILED BY  
KIERAN ALLEN



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throne and last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord." But as the war dragged on, Connolly in isolation both from a party and an international socialist movement, began to doubt the possibility of a revolutionary opposition to the war. There is evidence that he began to waver from his profound internationalism. In October 1915 he reprinted a nonsense article from a pro-war German Social Democrat who met the Kaiser. He described British deserters who fled to Ireland as "Brit Huns taking Irish jobs". In March 1916, he was writing of the need to honour St. Patrick in whom "we see the spiritual conception and separate identity of the Irish race".

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given way to a massive anti-conscription movement. The ITGWU grew from 5,000 to 40,000. The Bolshevik revolution unleashed a wave of hope when 10,000 Dublin workers celebrated its victory.

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### LESSONS

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# MARXISM MADE EASY

## Public opinion

### WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO WIN IT

IN THE teachers' dispute, the main argument against all-out action and an exams boycott is that it would not win "public sympathy".

Yet the tax strike of 1981 had huge support from "public opinion"—but they lost.

Clearly then, it is not "public opinion" which wins strikes: it is in fact the militancy and organisation of the workers involved and the solidarity which they receive from other workers.

But what is "public opinion" and what should be the attitude of Marxists towards it?

Marx's analysis of "public opinion" begins with the fact that the "public" is divided into classes—first and foremost a capitalist class and the working class—and must distinguish between the public opinion of the former and that of the latter.

The public opinion of the capitalist class is primarily determined by the return on its investments. It is able to decide its position on most issues of the day more or less directly by reference to its bank balances.

In addition to this the capitalist class has various institutions, such as the top schools and clubs, the Federated Union of Employers etc., which are totally sealed off from the mass of the "public" and through which it can shape its collective attitudes and policies.

Consequently the attitude of socialists towards this "public opinion" must be one of total hostility. The idea that it can be influenced against its interests by argument, propaganda or sympathy is a utopian day-dream. On the contrary, our first problem is ensuring that we are not influenced by it.

This brings us to the question of the public opinion of the working class. Since the essence of Marxism is that Socialism must be created by the working class itself, the opinion of the working class must obviously be a matter of great concern to us. But even here we are not dealing with a simple concept.

### DETERMINES

It might be thought that working class "public opinion" simply means the average of what working class people are thinking at any point in time, and that this can be discovered by means of opinion polls—70 percent of workers think this, 30 percent think that etc.

They may tell us approximately what workers are feeling but not how strongly they feel it, and this is crucial because it determines what they are likely to be prepared to do about it.

Working class opinion becomes a force only when it turns to action. For Marxists the existence of a minority of workers who feel strongly enough about an issue to fight on it is infinitely more

significant than a passive majority who may not agree but actually don't care much either way.

This leads to another more crucial aspect of working class opinion, which opinion polls cannot reveal and that is its sources. We have seen how the ruling class forms its opinions protected from the influence of other classes. This is not at all the case with the working class. On the contrary its opinions are continually shaped by institutions like the education system and the media, which are under the control of the ruling class.

The smooth running of capitalism depends on its ability to convince the majority of workers that the business of running society, i.e. politics, is not for them.

Generally speaking, capitalism succeeds in this before people even reach the age of voting or reading the newspapers.

Consequently, most workers most of the time are not interested or involved in politics in a serious way at all. They are preoccupied, not with teachers, pay or the Armed Struggle in the North, but with their own individual struggles for survival—and people who are not interested in a subject are likely to accept, more or less on trust, whatever they are told about it.

And what they hear about politics comes overwhelmingly from the ruling class. The result is the domination of "average" working class public opinion by the public opinion of the capitalists.

### IDENTICAL

There is one main antidote to this and that is experience. Working class experience is, of course, fundamentally different from capitalist experience, which is why working class opinion is never identical to, or completely controlled by, the ruling class. But it is only when that experience is one of struggle against capitalism and when it leads workers to a sense of their own potential power that it gives rise to really independent working class opinion.

Most of the time such experience is confined to a minority of the working class, but in certain situations, revolutionary situations, it becomes generalised and then the opinions of workers are transformed with amazing rapidity.

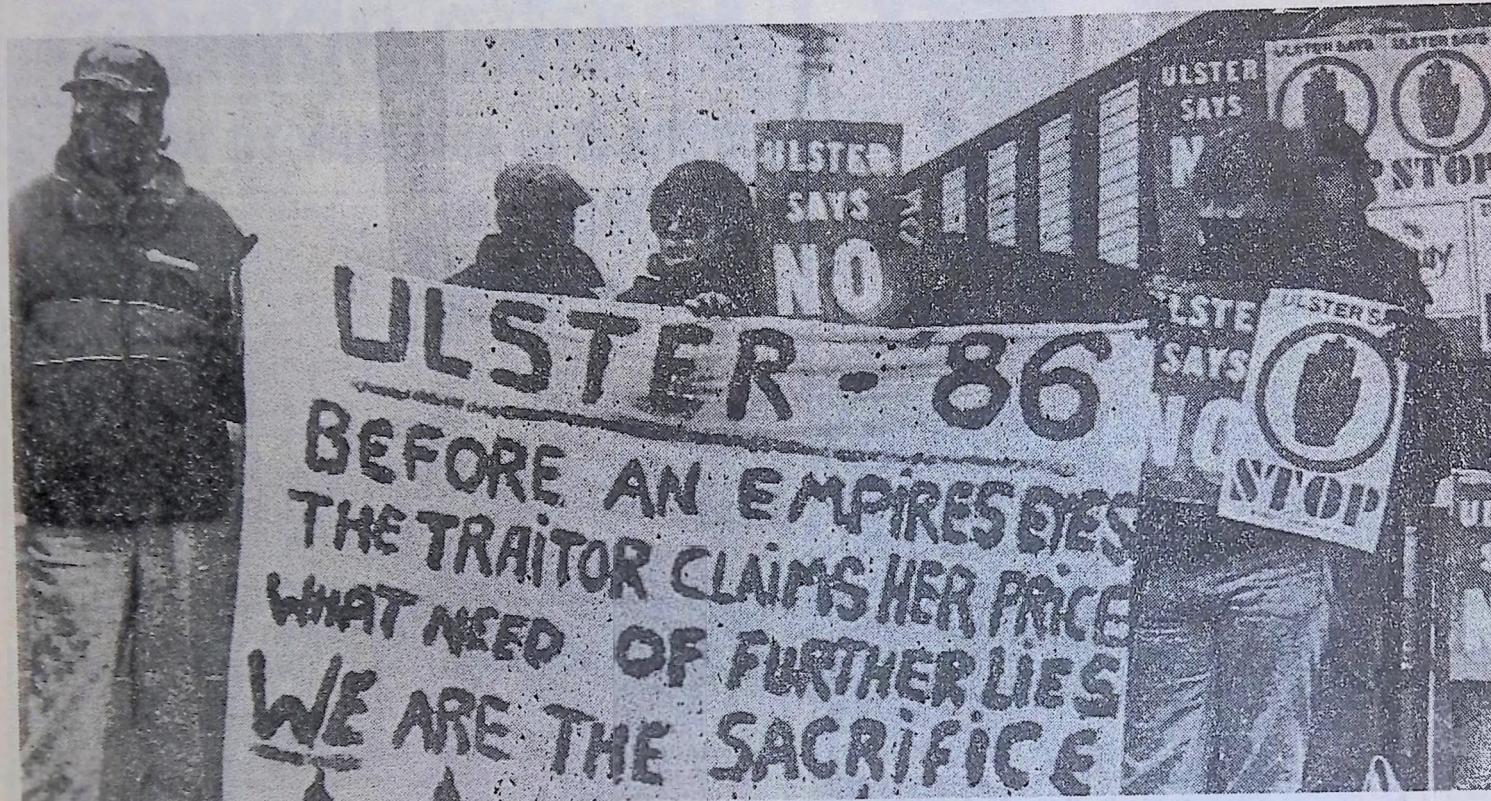
So where does that leave Marxists in relation to working class opinion at the moment? We are not indifferent to it and must always take it into account, but we are not dominated by it and we do not pander to it. For that would be to allow our opinions to be fixed, by remote control, by the ruling class.

Above all we do not accept that the activity of the minority who want to fight should be held back to the level of what is approved of by the "average" worker. For it is precisely that activity which holds the key to wrenching the public opinion of the working class free from the hold of the Tony O'Reillys and Rupert Murdochs of this world.

—DAVE McDONAGH

## ANALYSIS

# Can Protestant workers be won for socialism?



Protestant privilege is still a fact of life in the North.

The first half of a two-part article by Eamonn McCann

**THERE is no subject in Irish politics about which more nonsense is spoken than the Protestant working class.**

Most political groups—including all the major political parties—are either frightened or flummoxed by it. Usually both.

The reason for the fear and confusion is fairly simple. It is that any calm analysis of why Protestant workers cling to Orange bigotry leads to conclusions which most political organisations can't stomach.

We have to begin by facing the obvious fact that sectarian bigotry is still widespread and strong among a majority of Protestant workers. This was clear from the results of the 15 by-elections held in the North in January.

Right-wing Loyalists increased their support by thousands and won 78.6 per cent of the poll. Moreover, support was strongest in solid working-class areas like East Belfast.

This hard fact can't be wished away by claims that Protestant workers were "confused" or "misled" or by reference to the lack of credible alternative candidates in some constituencies. More Protestant workers went out to vote for Orange bigots than in 1983.

This fact was reinforced by the relative success of the

strike against the Anglo-Irish Agreement in February. Of course, there was widespread intimidation and, of course, the RUC did little to counter the intimidation. But if there

had been sizable hostility to the strike in the power stations, the shipyard, the engineering factories and so forth, the intimidation would not have worked. The strike call was answered because, while many Protestant workers might not have been enthusiastic about it, neither did it go against the grain. And what they were striking about was the apparent involvement of "representatives" of the Catholics in running Northern Ireland.

The strike was about keeping Catholics out. And "keeping Catholics out" means preserving Protestant privilege.

Orange bigotry is based on Protestant privilege today as surely as it was when the Orange Order was founded in 1795. Then, the privilege had to do with access to the best land on the most favourable terms. Today it has to do with jobs, houses, social prestige and access to political influence.

## PRIVILEGE

The fact that, from the Protestant worker's point of view, the privilege is pretty small matters not at all. When tuppence-halfpenny is looking down on tuppence, the half-penny difference can assume an importance out of all proportion to its actual size. The same is true for the "poor whites" of the southern states of the US or the skin-head racists of the National Front

in Britain.

The existence of Protestant privilege in the North down through the years is not seriously denied by anyone any more. The statistics can be taken from any census or survey in the last hundred years to do with relative rates of unemployment, average income, access to skilled jobs, housing conditions, emigration levels or whatever.

Nor is it seriously denied that from the inception of the Northern state in 1921 the preservation of Protestant privilege became official state policy. The quotes from Unionist prime ministers are so well-known they have become catch-phrases: "A Protestant parliament for a Protestant people" (Craigavon); "If we in Ulster allow Roman Catholics to work... we are traitors to Ulster" (Brookeborough); and so on and on.

This policy of anti-Catholic bigotry was enforced by means of repression and murder, often carried out by the official forces of the state (the RUC and B-specials), occasionally carried out by unofficial armed gangs and merely tolerated by the state.

These facts are now acknowledged on all sides... What, very often, is not acknowledged is that Protestant privilege is still a fact of life in the North.

For example, in January the Belfast magazine "Fortnight" published a survey of unemployed trends in the North by Cambridge economist Bob Rowthorn. Using the 1971 and 1981 census returns and statistics released since, Rowthorn traced the way patterns of unemployment affected the Protestant and Catholic

workers. What he discovered was very simple.

Average male unemployment had increased massively between '71 and '85 (from 10.3 to 26.4 percent). Within this, Protestant unemployment went up from 6.6 to an estimated 18-20 percent. But for Catholics the rise was from 17.3 to 38-40 percent. (The figures for female unemployment, published separately, showed the same pattern: average rise, 4.7 to 9.5; Protestant rise, 3.6 to 11-12; Catholic rise, 7.0 to 18-19.)

## TREND

In other words, while Protestant workers had become worse off over the 14-year period, Catholics had become worse off at a faster rate. The sectarian gap had not narrowed. It had become wider. And there is no reason to suppose that this trend is not continuing.

Despite the Fair Employment Act and the existence of a Fair Employment Agency, Catholics are still finding it impossible to get jobs in the shipyard, in Shorts aircraft factory, in the major engineering firms and so on.

And the same pattern—of a sectarian gap—emerges from Cookstown, Antrim, Derry, Armagh, Lisburn, Enniskillen... everywhere. Concluded Rowthorn: "The disparity between Catholics and Protestants will remain gigantic for the foreseeable future".

Thus when Protestant workers march today under the slogan "What we have we hold", they are talking about something very real. And

insofar as they have lost anything in the last two decades (in terms of direct control over the police and unchecked power in the councils) they are demanding: "What we used to have, we want back".

This fundamental fact is scarcely mentioned at all in most coverage of the North, which strives to suggest that the Protestant masses are just deluded demagogues, that if only the real situation was explained to them clearly they wouldn't follow the Orange drum any more. It's understandable that this mindless nonsense should be peddled by Fitzgerald and Barry and their hangers-on in the media: the right-wing nationalist tradition they represent has made evading the reality of the North into an art-form.

But the same line—that there's no real basis for Orange bigotry at all—is also pushed enthusiastically by self-styled socialists like the Labour Party left and the Workers' Party. (Indeed the Workers' Party goes further and suggests that Orange bigotry is merely an emotional reaction to militant Republicanism.)

Unless reality is faced it cannot be changed. Unless we deal with the real basis of Protestant workers' sectarianism we cannot devise a strategy for detaching Protestant workers from it.

When they attach themselves to sectarian ideas Protestant workers are entering an alliance with Protestant bosses. They are declaring that the religion they share with middle and upper class Protestants is more important than the status of worker which they share with

people of a different religion. The Orange Order and its associated bodies have traditionally provided the mechanism by which this integration took place.

Former Unionist Prime Minister Brian Faulkner summed it up perfectly when he told a Twelfth of July demonstration in 1963:

"Many a company director has marched with his lodge today shoulder to shoulder with wage earners. This is a healthy state of affairs".

What the wage earners got out of this was a feeling of involvement in the dominant group in society, plus a guarantee of a place towards the front of the queue for whatever jobs, houses etc. might be going.

What the company director class got out of it was a feeling of security that the wage earners wouldn't be marching against them. (Faulkner completed the quote by declaring that: "This is the right ground on which to base the soundest of industrial relations".)

Orange sectarianism has always played this role in working class politics, binding the workers to the boss-class, while simultaneously cutting off the possibility of alliance between workers and others of the same class.

Over and over again it has proved very useful to capitalism in the North. The history of the North is studded with examples of working class militancy being divided and destroyed by appeals from Orange bosses to Orange workers to desert the class battle-field and come back into the fold. The disintegration of the movement which had begun to gather behind Larkin in 1907, the sectarian violence which shattered the workers' unity built up in the mass Belfast strike of 1919 and the cynically-contrived sectarian split which followed the Poor Law riots in 1932 are some of the more "celebrated" examples.

## DESERTED

The fragile working class unity established on each of these occasions did not last long. But at least it happened. And on each occasion it happened in the course of working class struggle.

Indeed—and this is a point of overwhelming importance for socialists—the only occasions on which sizable numbers of working class Protestants have even temporarily deserted Orangeism have been occasions when they were involved in class struggles.

When they struggle to better themselves as workers, Protestants—like Catholics, Muslims, Hindus and Hottentots—must break with their bosses and associate themselves with other workers.

When they struggle to better themselves as Protestants, they must break with other workers and associate themselves with their bosses.

This is what socialists mean when they argue that only a movement based on the working class has any hope of breaking the Orange monolith asunder and defeating sectarianism in the North. It isn't an abstract matter of ideology. It's an entirely practical affair.

\* Next month, in the second part of this article, we will discuss how such a movement can be built.

# NEWS FROM SWM

## Karl Marx tour great success

LAST month's speaking tour on the politics of Karl Marx was a great success. Alan Gibbons from the Socialist Workers party in Liverpool spoke in five towns. Highlight of the tour was a student meeting in Waterford Regional Tech where 80 students turned up. A number have since agreed to take Socialist Worker into the college on a regular basis. In West Belfast 25 people turned up for a lively debate between various organisations on the left.

### BUILDING IN THE DOWNTURN

We are living in difficult times for revolutionary socialists. The working class is taking a hammering. Much of the resistance is taken action—like that involved in the teachers' strike. Those defeats have led to a drift to the right in Ireland.

It is in the tough times that revolutionary organisations and their ideas are tested most. The difficulties of the period have already pulled many left-wingers to the right—or into cynicism and anarchy. One sign of this rightward shift is the Labour Left arguing for

the Labour Party to support Fine Gael or Fianna Fail government from the back benches. Another has been the resignation of leading Peoples Democracy members and their new support for republican policies.

The SWM believes that it is necessary to recognise clearly the difficulties we are in—but to build by recruiting in the ones and twos. The organisation has shifted its emphasis onto educational and general politics. It holds day schools every two months for its members and supporters. This does not mean a retreat from active involvement in workers struggles. But it does mean that the priority for this period is the building of a hard political organisation through discussion and clarity of its ideas.

### BELFAST DAY SCHOOL

On Saturday April 12th, the Belfast SWM are organising a day school on our politics in the Conway Mills, West Belfast. There will be three sessions.

Session 1: Marxists and the Crisis. Paul O'Brien looks at how Marxist economics can explain capitalism's crisis.

Session 2: Connolly and 1916.

Kieran Allen looks at the politics of James Connolly and his involvement in the rising. Session 3: The Trotskyist tradition: Dermot Byrne looks at the relevance of Trotsky's theories for revolutionaries in Ireland today.

The Day School starts at 11 o'clock. For full details: write to SWM, PO Box 1648 Dublin 8.

### WATERFORD ON THE MOVE

The SWM in Waterford is booming. In February they organised a rock session for those on the dole and were more than surprised with the turn-out.

When the Rothman's car rally hit the town last month, they were out protesting against the South African connections of the company. The result of this activity has been a small but steady flow of recruits into the organisation.

Over the next few weeks they will hold fortnightly education meetings. Topics include: Reformism in Ireland; the Revolutionary paper; Organising in the downturn; How we organise in the unions.

For details of times and venue; write to National Office.

### SWM TEACHERS

SWM teachers have been arguing hard in their unions for all-out action to win the pay claim. 1,000 leaflets were distributed at the teachers' conferences to carry the arguments and over 50 Socialist Workers were sold.

Now they are following up their arguments with two public meetings on the theme "Solidarity with the Teachers".

First public meeting is in Dublin on Tuesday April 15th in the Clarence Hotel.

On April 16th, the Kilkenny branch have organised a similar meeting at the Club House Hotel.

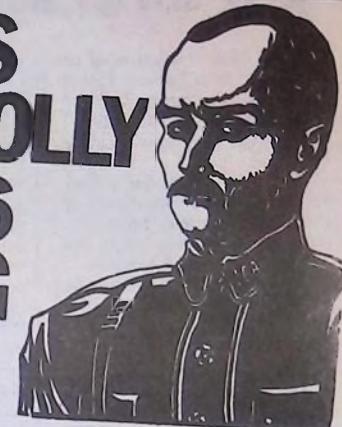
We invite all socialist teachers to come along and take part in the arguments on how the teachers can win.

### CONNOLLY AND 1916

On Wednesday 9th April, Kieran Allen talks on Connolly and the 1916 Rebellion. The meeting takes place in the CIE Hall, Marlboro Street 8pm.

## PUBLIC MEETING

### JAMES CONNOLLY & 1916 RISING



**speaker: Kieran Allen**

#### venue, date

CIE HALL,  
MARLBORO STREET.  
WEDNESDAY APRIL 9, 8pm.

**Socialist Workers Movement**

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights for a workers' republic and international socialism.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit—not for human need. It leads to poverty and war; racism and sexism. It is a system that can only be destroyed by the class which creates all the wealth—the working class.

#### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Capitalism cannot be patched up or reformed—it must be overthrown. That cannot be achieved through parliament as the Workers Party and the Labour Party argue. The real power in this society lies in the boardroom of big business. The structures of the present parliament, courts, army and police are designed to protect the interests of the ruling class against the workers. At most parliament can be used for propaganda against the system—it cannot be the instrument by which workers destroy the power of the rich. We therefore stand for a workers' revolution which produces a different and more democratic society—one based on councils of delegates from workplaces and areas who are democratically elected answerable to assemblies and subject to recall at any time.

#### NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

That kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers have no control over countries like Russia, China or Poland. They are exploited by a state capitalist class. A workers revolution is required in those countries too.

#### AGAINST PARTITION

The six county Orange state is propped up by British imperialism. That state divides the working class by the guarantee of marginal privileges in housing and jobs to Loyalist workers. The struggle of Catholic workers to rid themselves of sectarianism and bigotry can only succeed by smashing that state. The slow task of building working class unity against imperialism must be begun. However imperialism must be fought in the here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of our differences of programme.

We stand for:

- The immediate withdrawal of the British Army
- The disbandment of the RUC and UDR
- No to extradition and collaboration on border security

Connolly wrote that partition would bring a carnival of reaction. He was absolutely right. Irish workers confront two reactionary states. The Southern ruling class have no longer any fundamental conflict of interest with imperialism. They have become junior players in the world capitalist system. Their state props up partition—despite their occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The 'national question' will only be solved in the course of mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the struggle to nationalist goals, by appealing to all classes in Irish society, can never defeat imperialism. Only a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights openly for the Workers' Republic can unite sections of the working class who have nothing to gain from a bourgeois Eiro Nua.

#### AGAINST ALL OPPRESSION

Revolutionaries oppose all forms of oppression that divide and weaken the working class.

We are for real social, economic and political equality for women.

We are for an end to discrimination against homosexuals. We stand for full separation of the church and state. We stand for secular control of the hospitals and the schools.

#### THE UNIONS

Today the trade union movement is dominated by a caste of bureaucrats whose principal aim is to make their compromise with the system. They have destroyed solidarity between workers by the two tier picket system. They have failed to lead any fight over tax, wage cuts and unemployment.

We stand for:

- 100 percent trade unionism
- A 35 hour week to reduce unemployment
- The election of all union officials, subject to recall
- Against redundancies. We say: occupy to demand nationalisation under workers' control
- Full independence of the unions from the state. No reliance on the Labour Courts or the arbitration schemes in the public sector

We fight for the building of a national rank and file movement that links together the best militants to provide an alternative leadership to the trade union bureaucrats.

We fight for the formation of Right to Work committees that link the unemployed to the power of the trade union movement.

#### THE PARTY

To achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. The SWM aims to build such a party around its activity in the working class movement. It stands in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Connolly. We urge all those who agree with our policies to come in and join the SWM.



I would like more details about the Socialist Workers Movement

NAME . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . .

Send to SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

## REVIEWS

# Will Labour Left ever learn?

THE UTTER confusion of the left in the Irish Labour Party has never been more clearly expressed than in the May issue of the magazine "Labour Left".

The magazine is published by anti-Coalition members of the party. The May issue contains its submission to the "Commission on Electoral Strategy". This is the body set up by the party leadership last year to work out future policy on coalition.

(In fact, the real reason was to prevent the party membership making an immediate decision on whether to pull out of the present coalition—and all sections of the party, including Labour Left and Militant, went along with it.)

Labour Left's submission is a 40-page document entitled "Realignment in Irish Politics". It contains some useful research—about past electoral performances and changes in Irish society (the drift from the countryside into the towns, the developing age-structure of the population, etc)—and it quite rightly blames the recent steep decline in the party's credibility on Coalition.

However, when it comes to working out what to do instead of Coalition the Labour Left repeats exactly the same mistakes which led to the Coalition disaster in the first place!

The central point in the submission is that Labour should reject Coalition and "go it alone"—but not absolutely alone. Instead of Coalition, Labour Left suggests a strategy of "Minority Government Support"—which the pamphlet calls by its initials, MGS.

## BARGAIN

"MGS" means that after every election Labour would bargain with Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael offering to use its votes in the Dáil to put one of them into office, in return for a promise to take some of Labour's pet policies on board. But Labour would refuse to join the government. Instead it would retain its "independence" and its ability to bring the government down at a time of its own choosing.

This "independent" stance—so runs the argument—would enable Labour to campaign in the country at the same time for its own programme and to involve itself in trade union issues, women's issues, community issues etc, gradually drawing support from these areas in behind the party.

The end result according to Labour Left, would be that the Labour Party would make steady progress over a period of 15 years or so and win 25% of the votes at a general election. At that point it would "be on the verge of precipitating a fundamental transformation in political competition". That is, Labour would at last be in the big league and able to take on Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael on equal terms.

To spell it out: Labour Left is saying—that if everything goes absolutely according to plan—the Labour Party would be in a position to think about challenging the two main right-wing parties round about the

year 2005!

All this is worked out in great and complete detail by the authors of the submission. Their time-span, for example, is based on a calculation that MGS would produce four general elections in the 15 years after the next election and that Labour could increase its vote by 2.3 percent at each of these elections.

The policies of the Labour Party during this period would not be socialist. The submission is quite frank about that. Socialist policies would only become relevant after Labour has achieved its 25 percent poll, the argument being that there is no point putting forward socialist policies until you are able to make a realistic bid for office.

If we take it at its face value, Labour Left is saying that the party will be able to begin the campaign for socialism six general elections from now.

## DAFTNESS

It sounds daft, and indeed it is. And the daftness is derived from the fact that the Labour Left—like the Labour Right—begins and ends with the assumption that the purpose of the Labour Party is simply to win seats in Dail Eireann. And there's nothing surprising about that. Because that is the sole purpose of the Labour Party.

Thus when the Labour Left deals with the actual struggles of the working class in the here-and-now—whether it be the UCD cleaners' strike, the teachers' dispute, whatever—it does so from the point of view of how the Labour Party can intervene to win votes. It never once mentions how the Labour Party might intervene to win the dispute.

Usually, these are two very different things. For example, campaigning for blacking action to win a strike is frequently very unpopular in electoral terms. But, just as frequently, blacking is very necessary in terms of winning the strike. The miners' strike and the present printers' strike in Britain are cases in point, as was the ESB strike in Cork.

The only answer is to break with electoralism and to base your activity, not on making yourself gradually more popular over a period of decades by being "nice" to everybody in sight, but on the active vigorous support for the struggles of groups of workers which go on day in and day

out. It is when workers are in struggle—when they are on the picket line for example—that socialist ideas begin to make sense. It is basing yourself on that that an organisation can be built which will eventually be able to lead the working class to victory over the capitalist system which exploits us all.

But of course that's not what Labour Left is interested in. What they are out for is 50 percent plus one of the seats in Dail Eireann.

And since that is their only clear objective, it's small wonder that the submission never confronts the question of why they want a Dail majority at all. Only on the last page does the submission ask the question: What is "Labour's historical purpose"?

And having asked, at last, what Labour wants to win an election for, the submission answers... that they are not really sure! They are so obsessed with winning seats in parliament that they have quite forgotten (if they ever knew) what the purpose for all this activity is.

Here, as printed on the final page, is the complete account of Labour Left's understanding of their party's "historical purpose":

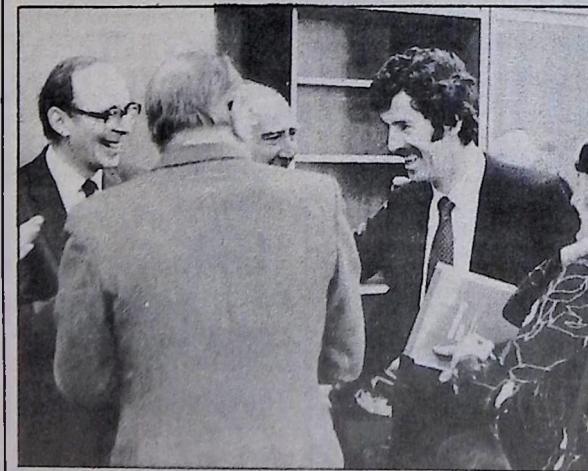
"Socialism will only be defined through the collective practice of the Labour Movement itself. Labour's historical purpose is to commence that definition throughout Irish society".

Or to put it more simply: "We'll work it out as we go along..."

No doubt many of those associated with Labour Left genuinely see themselves as socialists. No doubt their submission to the party commission is a genuine attempt to make the Labour Party a more meaningful presence in Irish politics and to rescue it from the grip of the careerists and hypocrites who are currently in control.

But the sickness of the Labour Party doesn't just have to do with the personalities who presently preside over it. It has to do with the very nature of the party itself.

Labour Party members who are serious about socialism should get out and join with the SWP in building a revolutionary socialist organisation which wants power for the working class rather than a different set of back-sides on the government benches in Leinster House.



Coalition is a disaster for Labour

## Turning American Dream on its head

*Less Than Zero* By BRET EASTON ELLIS (Picador)

*Less Than Zero* IS TRULY AN astoundingly remarkable book. It is, as countless reviewers have said before me, the 80s equivalent of *The Catcher In The Rye*. It's about the post-punk technological drop-out lifestyle of young residents of L.A.—beautiful, rich, spoilt brats whose life is an endless stream of sex, cocaine, night-clubs, drink, MTV, fast cars and a fast life to match.

Its author, Bret Easton Ellis, is a 19-year old student who was born and raised in Los Angeles. The comparison to *Catcher In The Rye* seems more relevant as the novel progresses. Its Narrator is Clay, back in L.A. to spend Christmas with his parents. It takes this return visit from College for Clay to see the lifestyle he for so long adored for what it really is—shallow, morally inept and totally self-centred and useless.

Just as the hero of *Catcher In The Rye* viewed the society created by his parents with sheer contempt, so too Clay views his own wasteful consumer society which he adhered to for so long.

As the novel speeds along, at a million miles an hour, everything gets progressively worse and more sickening. Clay and his cronies get turned on by seeing a dead body in an alleyway and refuse to inform the authorities until all their friends have had a good look. Sadist pornographic movies and rape of 12-year old girls makes the once-so-cool Clay revolted as he sees his L.A. for what it's really worth. All this intertwines with tales of long lost friends and relatives and the crimes and mutilations they committed.

Rock Music plays a large part of this book and constant references are made to the bland music that is piped into American cities 24 hours a day via television and radio. Indeed the novel's title, *Less Than Zero*, comes from an old Elvis Costello record and it is his wise face that looks down on Clay from his bedroom wall. All this serves to comment on the consumer society and how affluent teenagers are led along by this week's craze. Video games, rollerskates and MTV, add to this and become a pivotal point of the teenage



Real students model in Bongo's window in L.A.

lifestyle.

Where the novel falls down is in the fact that it portrays such a bleak and barren view of the wealthy in Reagan's America but offers no alternative. The book ends like this:

## REVERBERATE

"There was a song I heard when I was in Los Angeles, by a local group. The song was called "Los Angeles" and the words and images were so harsh and bitter that the song would reverberate in my mind for days...the images I had were of people being driven mad by living in the city...images of people, teenagers my own age looking up from the asphalt and being blinded by the sun... Images so violent and malicious that they seemed to be my only point of reference for a long time afterwards. After I left."

That's it! That's almost the point of his hatred of the city, apart from a refusal to participate in its perversions. The book has sold more than 20 million copies in America mainly among younger people for whom it is now THE adolescent novel.

The danger is that not everyone will see the novel in the way it portrays the L.A. lifestyle and some could possibly see it as desirable. A lot of the narrative is just reporting in a spontaneous Kerouac style which for a long time tends to leave the condemnation and criticism to the reader.

If you keep this in mind—and honestly it is hard not to condemn the prose style some bit, then *Less Than Zero* is the perfect depiction of the impersonal and revolting Reaganite American affluent lifestyle. This is a book that turns the American Dream on its head. A great read.

—GARRETT KEOGH

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## REVIEW/INDUSTRIAL NEWS

RECORD

# Music to beat the blues

by MARTIN SMITH

THE REDSKINS' new album, *Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism*, is a necessary antidote to the post-Geldof new realism of the turntables.

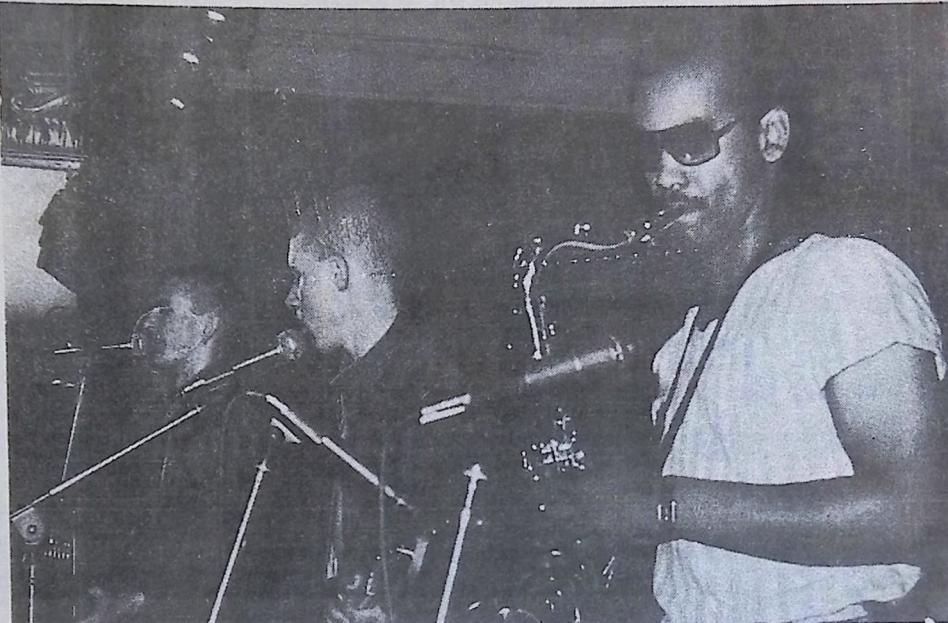
The music industry is a competitive world where it is not the quality of music that counts: it's the quantity of records that are sold.

The Redskins have the choice of either toning down the political content of their music, thereby becoming successful, or remaining true to their politics. They have chosen the latter.

During the late seventies a whole number of bands became politicised, for example the Clash, Tom Robinson and Black Uhuru.

The Clash sang songs about individual ways of fighting back.

The Redskins, on the other hand, realise that the key to changing society lies in the



hands of the working class. This is reflected in songs on the album like, 'Go Get Organised', 'Unionise' and 'The Power is Yours'.

Somebody once said, 'Music doesn't shape politics, politics shape the music'. That's why during the miners' strike it became clear that working class people could run and organise their own lives without the interference of the state and that life was not about profit but equality.

However, it is over a year since the miners were de-

feated and it is now the ideas of the right wing which are in command. Socialism in some quarters is now a forgotten word.

## Inspiration

At the moment the ruling class seem to have it all their own way and that is why the song 'Keep on Keeping on' is the most important on the album.

Nobody can doubt the Redskins' sincerity. Over the last year they have played benefits for the miners, black

workers in South Africa and the Liverpool Labour council.

The Redskins can't change the world by themselves. But they can provide us with the inspiration to keep fighting for that change when the going gets tough.

Everybody should buy this record and put it on their bookshelves alongside their Victor Serge novels. And, of course, play it sometimes as well.

*Neither Washington nor Moscow* is available at £4.99 from London Records.

## OUT NOW

What we stand for  
and  
Four questions of  
revolutionary socialism

£1.20 post free from:  
SWM PO Box 1648  
Dublin 8

# Picketing support needed in shop strike

THE STRIKE on the premises of Michael Guiney Ltd has been in progress since the 25th January.

The strike resulted from the dismissal of Dermot Flanagan who has been with the firm for the last seven years. He was dismissed over an error which did not cost the company or its customers any money.

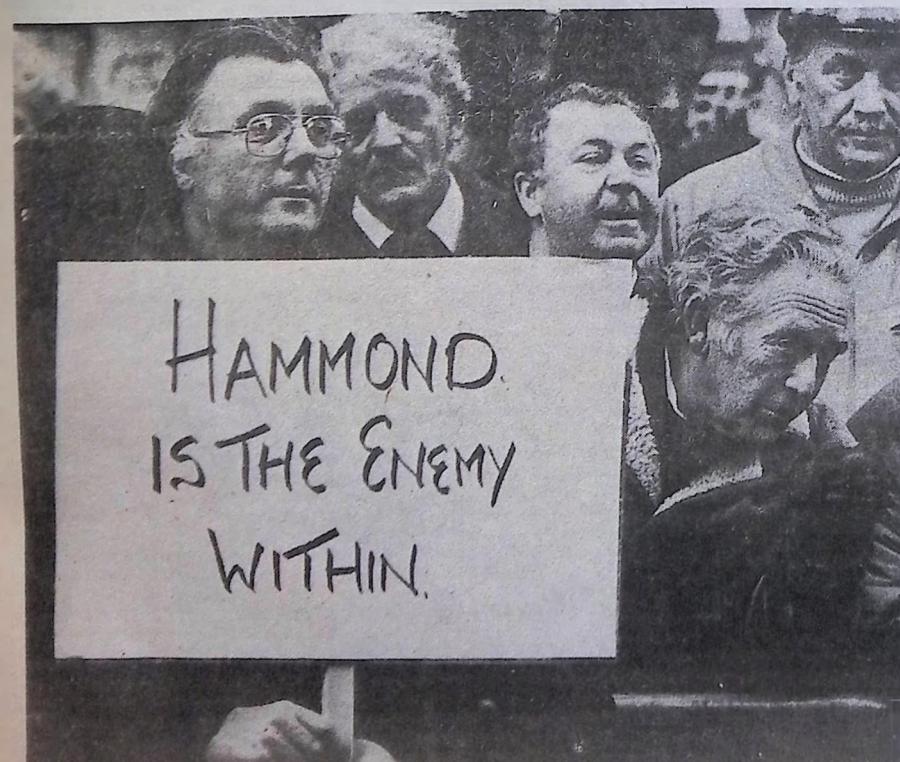
From the beginning the strike was made official by IDATU and later received an All-Out Congress picket. Dermot Flanagan was joined by two of his workmates on the picket line but the remaining non-union staff continued to work. Because of this action by the staff it is important that this picket receives not just moral support but also support of a more practical nature. That is people coming down and helping on the picket line.

A consistent and effective picket is essential if this blatant case of unfair dismissal is to be reversed. It was obvious from the management's reluctance to negotiate even before the beginning of the strike that one of the main factors in winning this dispute would be the power of the picket.

There is no doubt that if this strike receives the support it deserves it will eventually obtain the reinstatement of Dermot Flanagan.

—KEVIN HOWLEY, Guiney's picket.

# EETPU Fight rotten leadership



THE RECRUITMENT of scab labour for the Wapping printing plant by the leadership of the EETPU has come as no surprise to the majority of Irish members of that union.

At practically every meeting in the Dublin branch, the rank and file have expressed their total opposition to the extreme right-wing views of the Executive Council.

Resolutions condemning the complete lack of democracy in the union have been passed time and time again, but all to no avail.

## RELUCTANT

The closing down of branches in Britain goes almost unchallenged and individuals are reluctant to criticise the leadership for fear of being penalised.

That the EETPU leadership was able to defy the TUC and accept Thatcher's money for postal ballots was just another indication of the power of the right-wing within the union.

the leadership has been in the printers' dispute. Here print workers, members of the NGA and Sogat, are engaged in the most important struggle since the miners' dispute. It is in every trade unionist's interest that Murdoch is beaten at Wapping. If he wins we will witness massive lay-offs in the print industry, a scab's charter that no self-respecting worker could abide by.

And even more important, it would increase even further the confidence of the courts, government and bosses in Britain to openly attack the very principle of trade unionism. One of Murdoch's greatest assets in this struggle is the leadership of the EETPU. For without their willingness to recruit electricians to scab in Wapping, Murdoch's printing plant could not remain in production.

This scabbing with its "no strike" deal once again defies TUC rules, but no action has been taken against the union. Having found the FFTPU

TUC let the union off the hook. All that was required from the EETPU was a commitment not to assist further in recruitment. But the damage was already done.

## BETRAYAL

The TUC's failure to make an example of the union is a betrayal of 6,000 sacked printers. It is now up to the rank-and-file of the EETPU to organise resistance against the leadership. The Irish members' role in this must be twofold. First, resolutions should be put at every branch meeting condemning the role the EETPU played in the Wapping dispute and calling for the resignation of Eric Hammond and his Executive.

But more important, the activists within the EETPU must try to organise the rank-and-file to challenge the right-wing leadership and its ideas which led to the scab operation at Wapping.

# Socialist Worker

## TEACHERS' STRIKE Escalate the action!

- ★ National all-out strike
- ★ Organise solidarity action
- ★ Involve part-time teachers
- ★ Stop the exams

THE TEACHERS'S strike is entering a decisive stage. Regional all-out action for 4 weeks is planned for after Easter.

But the union leaders are also showing signs of weakening. The TUI leaders' decision to invite Paddy Cooney to address their conference was a disgrace. The attempt to involve the Church authorities in "mediation" is another step backwards from the position in the beginning of the strike where INTO's General Secretary, Gerry Quigley, ruled it out.

Here JAMES McILLINNEY looks at the conduct of the strike and the socialist strategy for victory.

IT IS now seven months since teachers should have begun to reap the benefit of the arbitrator's 10% award, without a penny having been paid. This dispute led to a series of one day strikes before Christmas in which the vast majority of teachers showed their willingness to fight.

Unfortunately, many felt, and still do, that this type of token show of strength would sway the government. Likewise, faith was placed in the 3-day actions of the past month. While this stepping-up of the campaign was welcome (and agreed to by a big majority of members) the disruption has not been substantial. Furthermore, it would be expected that any union six months in dispute would be adopting a much more effective action.

The building-up of action

was fine, but the time-span has been much too long. We now face a crucial two months in which the strike will almost surely be decided.

Just before the Easter conferences the union leaders called for regional all-out stoppages. This is a big advance—but it is still very late and limited. It is only by closing the schools entirely that the education system would be fully disrupted. Only then would the government be forced into concessions.

### LEGACY

Yet the legacy of 30 years of arbitration-settled agreements is hanging over the teachers' unions at the moment. This legacy has encouraged passivity among the members. They still feel that "reason will prevail", despite everything the govern-

ment has said and done in the dispute.

An example of this was the decision to allow the oral examinations to go ahead (in recognition of the change of minister). This was a totally mistaken decision and has merely boosted government confidence in feeling teachers won't go all the way. After all, Minister Cooney felt so buoyant that he provocatively announced his plans to go ahead with Leaving Cert exams.

This kind of softly, softly approach has left the teachers in an increasingly weak position as the summer vacation approaches.

A national all-out strike would be the ideal way to break the government. The argument that it cannot be personally afforded by many must be countered by the argument that we cannot afford to lose the strike. Defeat would weaken the teachers' position for years in terms of pay and other conditions.

There must be a commitment to have the exams stopped. Cooney will try every trick in the book to get over this one. It is an area where "Teachers United" must seek the help of other unions to have any hope of success. An appeal to the print unions not to print

advertisements for scab supervisors and examiners would be a first step. It would also be necessary to appeal to the civil service unions not to handle exam papers.

25% of teachers in the Dublin VEC are now part-time and their poor conditions will doubtless be harped on by the popular press as an encouragement to them to scab on exams. But many part-time teachers realise it is *their* strike just as much as the permanent staff. They should remember that their bad conditions are caused by the government refusing to make them permanent. The unions should recognise their plight and fully involve them in strike action. Extension of full membership would be a step in the right direction.

### JOLT

The biggest jolt the government would get would be from *national* all-out action, and militants must push for the stopping of exams and a ban on extra-curricular activities.

The Sunday Tribune and the rest of them will have a field day but if the teachers have not got the stomach, you can be sure the government has.

## Is INTO bending the knee?

MEMBERS OF 10 branches of the INTO submitted a resolution for their conference calling for opposition to the ban on employment of "non-practising" Catholics in schools. They represented 6,000 members—or almost a third of the Southern INTO. Yet still the Conference arrangements committee refused to put the issue on the agenda.

The issue is a vital one for primary school teachers. There is no state owned and run primary schools in Southern Ireland. The care of education has been handed over to the Churches. This despite the fact that the State hands over the bulk of the funds for

running and building the schools.

Now the "new right" amongst the Catholic hierarchy are trying to tighten the screw. Last year they issued guidelines on the appointment of teachers—and threatened to exclude "non-practising Catholics".

It was immediately seen as a clerical spy's charter. Its aim was to force national teachers into looking over their shoulder at their local parish priest and even neighbours. The vast majority of teachers saw it as downright interference.

But there was no opposition from the INTO leadership. Why? A charitable explanation is that they "didn't want to open a second front" during the pay dispute. But there is also a suggestion that there is a deep ambiguity among the union leaders to Church authority.

In any case, militants in the union should be arguing for a union campaign on the issue. The crawl-thumping before the bishops has always been the secret of the unions' weakness. In 1947 for example, a heroic strike was lost after teachers returned to work following an appeal from the Archbishop of Dublin. In the 30s, socialists and republicans were hounded out of the schools by the bishops—while the unions stood aside.

It is only by hitting back hard against the likes of McNamara, that the union will defend itself in the years ahead. In the long run, such a campaign should lay the basis of a call to nationalise the primary schools.



### Public Meetings SOLIDARITY WITH THE TEACHERS

DUBLIN:  
Tuesday April 15, 8pm  
Clarence Hotel

KILKENNY:

Wednesday April 16, 8pm  
Club House Hotel  
Socialist Workers Movement